

CHAPTER 6

FUTURE LAND USE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Guide is an important component of this Community Plan. The Guide is a policy framework for future land use decisions within the County. Used in conjunction with the future land use maps found in Chapter 7 of the Plan, the Guide serves as a reference for all citizens on the most desirable location for future land use activities throughout the county. The Future Land Use Guide also implements, to the extent possible, the design guidelines discussed in Chapter 3.

The Guide should be used by Roanoke County citizens and property owners who are evaluating alternative uses for their land and will be used by Roanoke County staff, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in the evaluation of requested land use amendments.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The following designations are used to identify areas around the county where similar land use activities occur. The type of land uses which are desirable within each designation are also described.

In addition, this section includes land use determinants. These determinants or factors are used to evaluate requested changes to the future land use maps. The careful examination of these factors will determine which land use designation a piece of land should be in.

Conservation: A future land use area of particular environmental sensitivity due to topography, existence of unique land characteristics, conservation/open space/greenway easements, soil types or location with respect to other State or Federally preserved lands. Typical resources would include wetlands, ridgelines, mountainsides, scenic views from the Blue Ridge Parkway and Appalachian Trail, identified greenway corridors, productive agricultural lands, historical and cultural resources and threatened or endangered species habitats.

Land Use Types: Agricultural Production - The production of crops, plants, vines, trees, livestock, poultry and eggs and associated services such as soil and crop preparation, landscape and horticultural care.

Forest and Wood Products - Tree farms, forest nurseries and reforestation services.

Parks - Large regional park facilities that are designed and developed to preserve the environmentally sensitive nature of the land.

Public Lands - Includes land that is owned by a public entity but is not an official park. Examples would be Haven's Wildlife Management Area, Spring Hollow Reservoir, Carvin's Cove watershed, Appalachian Trail, Blue Ridge Parkway, Forest Service lands and publicly owned land on Green Ridge Mountain.

Conservation Easements - Includes private lands that are protected by a conservation easement (includes scenic, agricultural, greenway and open space easements) held either by a private land trust or a State agency.

Rural Residential - Very limited, low density single-family homes generally averaging a gross density of one unit per 10 acres. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Land Use Determinants: **EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN** - Locations where unique and important natural, agricultural, historical and cultural resources exist that deserve to have the highest level of protection.

RESOURCE PROTECTION - Locations where valuable and irreplaceable resources such as open space, public water supply impoundments, rivers, streams, lakes, productive agricultural land, woodlands, critical slopes, ridgelines, historical and archeological sites and unique natural areas exist.

ACCESS - Locations that are accessible by existing improved or unimproved rural roads.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations not served by urban services.

Rural Preserve: A future land use area of mostly undeveloped, outlying lands. These rural regions are generally stable and require a high degree of protection to preserve agricultural, forestal, recreational, and remote rural residential areas.

Land Use Types: Agricultural Production - The production of crops, plants, vines, trees, livestock, poultry and eggs.

Agricultural Services - Services that support agricultural production such as soil and crop preparation, veterinary services and landscape and horticultural care.

Forest and Wood Products - Tree farms, forest nurseries and reforestation services.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation Facilities - Large regional parks and other recreation facilities that are designed to preserve environmentally sensitive lands and protect them from more intense land uses.

Rural Residential - Single-family residential generally averaging a gross density of one unit per three acres. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Rural Institutional - Limited intensity uses such as religious assembly facilities and clubs serving the local rural population base.

Mining and Extraction Operations - Those uses that locate according to the availability of natural resources. There are strict limitations on these industries in the Rural Preserve designation due to potentially harmful effects on housing, farming and resource protection and conservation areas.

Land Use Determinants: EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where agricultural, recreational, and forestal uses are predominant and are encouraged to expand.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where agricultural zoning is in effect.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL AREAS - Locations where limited, very low density residential and institutional uses are allowed.

RESOURCE PROTECTION - Locations where valuable and irreplaceable resources such as open space, public water supply impoundments, rivers, streams, lakes, productive agricultural land, woodlands, critical slopes, ridgelines, historical and archeological sites and unique natural areas exist.

ACCESS - Locations that are accessible by existing improved or unimproved rural roads and, to a lesser extent, rural arterial highways.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations outside the urban service area.

Rural Village: A future land use area where limited development activity has historically occurred and where suburban or urban development patterns are discouraged. These rural community and farming areas are generally in between the intense suburban development patterns already established in the County and the designated Conservation and Rural Preserve areas.

Land Use Types: Rural Housing - Low-density single-family residential generally averaging one unit per acre. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Rural Community Centers - Nonresidential uses which serve rural residents such as outdoor recreation and park facilities, religious assembly facilities, schools, fire and rescue stations and clubs.

Agricultural Production and Services - Livestock, orchards and crop productions, landscape and horticultural services, veterinary services, farm labor and farm management services. Generally including all activities that support land based uses.

Forest and Wood Products - Includes the operation of timber tracts, tree farms, forest nurseries and the gathering of forest products. Excludes sawmills and large-scale timber cutting operations.

Small Scale Commercial - Limited commercial operations that serve the local, rural community. Included would be personal services and retail convenience stores.

Rural Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Parks and recreational facilities that are designed to preserve the environmentally sensitive character of the rural landscape.

Land Use Determinants: EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where very low density residential, institutional and limited agricultural uses have developed.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where rural residential and agricultural zoning have been established.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION AREAS - Locations where small scale, very low density rural residential housing is desirable.

AGRICULTURAL - Locations where existing agricultural uses and activities are present.

ACCESS - Locations served by an existing improved rural road and, to a lesser extent, rural arterial highways.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations outside the urban service area.

Village Center: A future land use area which serves as the commercial and institutional focal point of surrounding rural residential and farming establishments. Here, the highest level of rural

land use activities may occur. By nature, the majority of commercial and institutional activities in Village Center areas are designed, scaled and marketed to best serve the product and service needs of the residents from the surrounding rural areas.

Land Use Types: Agricultural Production and Services - Services which support the surrounding agricultural community.

Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Small-scale facilities that serve the rural neighborhoods or are used for community purposes. These recreation facilities should be linked to the residential areas by greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths.

Eco-tourism - Facilities that serve a niche market and are often outdoor, sports oriented. Designed in an environmentally sensitive way to protect the valuable natural resources of the rural areas.

Residential - Development at relatively high rural densities, generally not exceeding 6 units per acre and including single-family and two-family housing.

Rural Community Centers - Includes institutional uses such as schools, religious assembly facilities, clubs and meeting rooms that serve the needs of the surrounding rural village residents.

Convenience Retail - Establishments that provide retail goods and services to the surrounding rural village residents.

Rural Highway Retail - Small-scale, rural establishments that provide retail goods and services to the passing motorists. These uses should be clustered in a village design that complements the rural surroundings.

Land Use Determinants: EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where commercial, institutional and low- to middle-density residential uses have developed and that are generally surrounded by rural residential settlements.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where commercial zoning has been established.

ACCESS - Locations that are usually situated at a crossroad and are served by a rural arterial.

RURAL SECTOR - Locations outside the urban service area.

Neighborhood Conservation: A future land use area where established single-family neighborhoods are delineated and the conservation of the existing development pattern is encouraged.

Land Use Types: Single-Family Residential - Attached and detached housing at a reasonable density that is not significantly higher than the existing neighborhood. Infill lots or community re-development should be designed to be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood but can be at reasonably higher density. New single-family residential developments should incorporate greenways and bike and pedestrian trails. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Neighborhood Institutional Centers - Uses that serve the neighborhood residents including parks, schools, religious assembly facilities, recreational and park facilities, community meeting areas and clubs. These facilities should be linked to the residential areas by greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths.

Neighborhood Commercial - Low impact services to serve the local neighborhood that are consistent with the Community Plan design guidelines.

Land Use Determinants: EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where limited density residential subdivisions have been platted and developed.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations where limited density residential zoning has been established.

EXPANSION AREAS - Locations where the expansion of the existing development pattern is logical.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT - Locations where infill areas complement the surrounding development pattern.

ACCESS - Locations served by a local street system.

URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

Development: A future land use area where most new neighborhood development will occur, including large-scale planned developments which mix residential with retail and office uses. Innovation in housing design and environmental sensitivity in site development is a key objective. Clustered developments are encouraged as is the use of greenways and bike and pedestrian trails.

Land Use Types: Conventional Residential - Single-family developments in conventional lots. Includes attached, detached and zero-lot line housing options. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Cluster Residential - Single family developments with similar gross density of conventional subdivisions but individual lot sizes may be reduced to accommodate the clustering of housing while allocating common open space. Includes attached, detached and zero-lot line housing options. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Multi-family - Developments of 6-12 units per acre. Clustering is encouraged as are greenways and bike and pedestrian trails.

Planned Residential Development - Mixed housing types at a gross density range of 4-8 units per acre. Includes conventional housing, cluster housing, zero lot-line housing, townhouses and garden apartments. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Planned Community Development - Planned residential development mixed with office parks, neighborhood shopping centers and supporting retail development. The majority of the development is residential with a maximum limit set on the retail land. Greenways and bike and pedestrian trails are encouraged.

Community Activity Centers - Facilities which serve the neighboring residents including parks, schools, religious assembly facilities, parks and recreational facilities and community clubs and meeting areas. These activity centers should be linked to residential areas by greenways, bike and pedestrian trails.

Land Use Determinants: PUBLIC FACILITIES CAPACITY - Locations where public facilities are adequate to handle the increased population concentration. This includes schools, parks and recreation facilities and fire and rescue facilities.

UTILITY AVAILABILITY - Locations where water and sewer services exist or are scheduled to serve the area.

ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY - Locations where natural land features, including topography, provide optimum opportunity for urban residential development.

ACCESS - Locations which have or can provide direct access to a major street.

URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

Transition: A future land use area that encourages the orderly development of highway frontage parcels. Transition areas generally serve as developed buffers between highways and nearby or adjacent lower intensity development. Intense retail and highway oriented commercial uses are discouraged in transition areas, which are more suitable for office, institutional and small-scale, coordinated retail uses.

Land Use Types: Office and Institutional - Planned office parks and independent facilities in park-like surroundings are encouraged. A high degree of architectural design and environmentally sensitive site design is encouraged.

Retail - Small-scale planned and clustered retail uses.

Multifamily Residential - Garden apartments at a density of 12 to 24 units per acre.

Single-Family Attached Residential - Planned townhouse communities of 6 or more units per acre.

Parks - Public and private recreational facilities. These facilities should be linked to residential areas by greenways, bike and pedestrian trails.

Land Use Determinants: EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where limited commercial uses exist.

 EXISTING ZONING - Locations where commercial zoning exists.

 ACCESS - Locations where properties have direct frontage and access to an arterial or major collector street.

 SURROUNDING LAND USE - Locations which serve as a logical buffer strip between conflicting land use patterns.

 ORIENTATION - Locations which are physically oriented toward the major street.

 URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

Core: A future land use area where high intensity urban development is encouraged. Land uses within core areas may parallel the central business districts of Roanoke, Salem and Vinton. Core areas may also be appropriate for larger-scale highway-oriented retail uses and regionally-based shopping facilities. Due to limited availability, areas designated as Core are not appropriate for tax-exempt facilities

Land Use Types: General Retail Shops and Personal Services - Planned shopping centers and clustered retail uses are encouraged. These centers should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian trails into their designs and link them to surrounding neighborhoods.

Office and Institutional Uses - Planned developments are encouraged.

Limited Industrial Uses - Planned uses in areas designated as economic opportunity areas.

Land Use Determinants: EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where commercial uses have been developed or will likely be developed.

 EXISTING ZONING - Locations where commercial zoning exists.

 ACCESS - Locations served by an arterial street system.

 POPULATION CENTER - Locations within close proximity to the projected population concentrations.

 URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by urban services.

Principal Industrial: A future land use area where a variety of industry types are encouraged to locate. Principal Industrial areas are existing and planned regional employment centers and are distributed throughout the county, convenient to major residential areas and suitable highway access. Due to limited availability, areas designated as Principal Industrial are not appropriate for tax-exempt facilities.

Land Use Types: Agricultural - Industries which involve the manufacturing, storage, marketing and wholesaling of agricultural products. These industries may also be located outside of the Principal Industrial areas, within the rural designations, where agricultural skills may be found.

Small Industries and Custom Manufacturing - These industries typically serve a local market and may involve the on-site production of goods by hand manufacturing.

Mining and Extraction - These facilities locate according to the availability of natural resources.

Industrial - Conventional freestanding industrial uses, warehouses, wholesalers, storage yards.

Industrial Parks - Large tracts of land that are subdivided, developed and designed according to a unified plan. These parks are employment centers and may include mixed land uses including supporting retail services. These types of industries are encouraged to develop in Principal Industrial areas. Planned industrial parks should incorporate greenways, bike and pedestrian paths into their designs and link these features to surrounding neighborhoods where appropriate.

Land Use Determinants: EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN - Locations where industry has historically developed.

EXISTING ZONING - Locations zoned industrial.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS - Locations identified by Roanoke County as an economic opportunity area.

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS - Locations where labor-intensive industries exist.

TOPOGRAPHY - Locations that can be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner and that are outside of the designated floodplain.

RESOURCE PROTECTION - Locations that can be developed in such a way as not to threaten valuable natural resources.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AND SUPPLY - Locations where water and sewer service exist or can be provided in the near future.

ACCESS - Locations served by an adequate public street system that does not direct traffic through existing residential neighborhoods.

TRANSPORTATION CENTERS - Locations within close proximity to rail, airport and major street systems.

URBAN SECTOR - Locations served by, or in close proximity to urban services.

LAND USE POLICIES

The following land use policies apply to all land use designations.

GENERAL

1. Act proactively to manage growth. Encourage and direct growth toward those areas of the County that can support it with the appropriate and necessary infrastructure, facilities and services and discourage development where the infrastructure and transportation system cannot support it.
2. Encourage sustainable economic growth that enhances the quality of life and fosters economic health.
3. Encourage land use development patterns that reflect community values and desires. Discourage land consumptive development patterns.
4. Allow flexibility in site design to encourage the preservation of unique natural resources and open space.
5. Recognize the uniqueness of our community. Work actively to protect those features and characteristics that distinguish Roanoke County from every other community.
6. Use high quality architectural features and character in addition to creative landscape design to develop sites that are sensitive to the environment and respect the unique land features of the site.

RESOURCE PRESERVATION

1. Prevent or discourage land development that will destroy the County's valuable natural resources including ridgelines, mountains, floodplains, wetlands, scenic vistas and water quality. Develop incentives that will make this policy more palatable.
2. Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands. These farms have economic, educational, open-space and cultural value.
3. Encourage the preservation of historic and cultural resources in the County. Recognize the importance these features and sites have in the quality of life and collective history of County citizens.
4. Use creative and flexible site design techniques to protect natural resources while allowing reasonable densities.

DESIGN

1. Implement, through the rezoning process, design guidelines for all new developments to encourage architectural and site design features that enhance the surrounding community and work in cooperation with the topography and land features. Provide incentives where appropriate to facilitate this process.
2. Encourage planned residential, commercial and industrial centers that utilize coordinated access points, parking and signage and common design themes.

NEIGHBORHOODS

1. Recognize that because of the suburban nature of Roanoke County, most citizens identify more closely with their own neighborhoods than with the County as a whole.
2. Assist neighborhoods in promoting their own identities and forming neighborhood civic leagues.
3. Preserve the stability of residential neighborhoods by discouraging the intrusion of incompatible uses.
4. Recognize that in order to discourage sprawl and protect rural lands and natural resources, some reasonable increase in housing density may be necessary as infill development and re-development occurs.
5. Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of older neighborhoods, recognizing that these homes provide a viable source of affordable housing to the community.
6. Design traffic circulation patterns so that traffic is routed around rather than through residential neighborhoods whenever feasible. This policy is not meant to encourage cul-de-sacs but rather to examine the use of more narrow neighborhood streets, grid patterns, etc. to protect County neighborhoods from cut-through traffic.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. Continue to support the concept of neighborhood schools and recognize their importance as a focal point of existing, stable neighborhoods.
2. Encourage the use of school facilities for multiple purposes including community meeting places, recreational facilities and open space.

3. Recognize the impact that large residential developments have on community facilities, including schools, parks and police and fire services. Consider the use of impact fees and proffers to offset some of these costs.
4. Promote regional cooperation in the provision of all community services including public safety, libraries, schools, parks and utilities.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Ensure that County citizens and staff have the opportunity to participate in transportation planning at the initial stages of plan development.
2. Require that transportation plans consider the viability and economic feasibility of alternative modes of transportation including greenways, bike paths, sidewalks and walking trails.

OPEN SPACE

1. Prioritize the open space resources of the County and develop implementation strategies for preserving and protecting these valuable resources.
2. Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands. These farms have economic, educational, open space and cultural value.
3. Encourage private property owners of large tracts of open space lands to preserve these properties using tax incentives.
4. Participate and support the Western Virginia Land Trust in its endeavors to preserve the natural resources of Roanoke County.

GREENWAYS

1. Greenways and greenway easements should be incorporated into new residential subdivisions and office and industrial parks.
2. New road construction and widening of existing roads should include serious consideration of greenways and bikeways and their associated benefits and costs.
3. Provide for the construction and maintenance of greenways by incorporating them into the Department of Parks and Recreation's park system with adequate

funding.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Create an effective business environment which fosters the growth and prosperity of existing business and industry.
2. Seek new business development and investment in Roanoke County in areas planned and designated as economic opportunity areas.
3. Develop and implement plans and programs to attract tourists to Roanoke County.
4. Recognize that the scenic beauty of the Roanoke County area is an essential ingredient in the tourist experience. Support efforts to preserve and protect these valuable natural resource features.
5. Create an effective mechanism so that the County can work together with citizens and civic associations to develop or preserve their community in its economic and social dimensions.
6. Encourage the diversification of the County economy.
7. Provide adequate land for commercial and industrial growth while minimizing the impacts on residential neighborhoods and natural resources.
8. Recognize that developable land is in low supply and encourage the re-use, re-development and occupancy of existing, vacant commercial space rather than developing additional land.
9. Recognize that County citizens desire and support economic growth, even in close proximity to their neighborhoods, when the developments are carefully designed, the buildings have aesthetically pleasing and site appropriate architecture, and creative site design elements that are sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods, are utilized.
10. Encourage the development of greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths in all new commercial and industrial park developments.